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OF

## SERMONS

PREACHED BY

### HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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## GRIEVING THE SPIRIT.

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"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.—*EPH. iv., 30.*"

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Here, as in many other places, the existence and the active agency upon the human heart of the Divine Spirit are not so much taught as taken for granted. It was the universal belief, but in Christianity the idea was purified and exalted. More than that, it is taught here, or implied, that under the divine influence of the Spirit there are conditions in the human soul which modify the result,—or else why should men be dissuaded from courses of conduct that would grieve the Spirit of God?

For a long time, it was needful that men should have the conception of God cleansed from the degradation which was incident to the earliest thoughts of Him. The human race has learned its way, by gradual unfoldings, from the most rudimentary notions of divine intelligence up to those high and pure ideas which exist in our time; and it became necessary, in the progress of this unfolding, that such conceptions of God as were derived from physical force, from the animal nature of man, should be modified, and that God should be set forth as a spiritual Being,—controlling all nature, and yet not himself made up of matter, and not, therefore, a material God, but an invisible spiritual force in which inhere the vitality, the wisdom, the goodness, and the government of the universe.

In the process of evolving this higher conception of God, it was necessary, at times, that it should be in marked con-



trast, first, with idolatry, or such representations of the divine nature as were capable of being made to the imagination of men through material forms. Thus, in the passage which I read in the opening service, God condemns and ridicules those conceptions of himself that were capable of being put into metal—gold and silver—or into stone or wood, declaring himself as transcendentally above the possibility of any such representation. And again, where the reigning power of the universe received in men's thoughts a characterization derived from the best specimens of monarchy which then existed (an oriental monarchy at that), it became necessary to divest the conception of those imperfections, crudities, and abominations, which inhered in it, and to represent the God of the universe as something better and nobler than a mere reigning force, and especially such a reigning force as men see in the monarchs, the kings, the sultans of oriental lands.

So, in a nobler disposition to represent God as moral, not physical; as spiritual and invisible, and comprehensible only by the interior force, never traced by the eye, nor approached by the hand; to exalt him into his own sphere, it was needful often to use strong metaphors and illustrations, designed to dissuade men from the fleshly view. And out of that has grown, in later times, a method of representing God which, when carried to an extreme, certainly seems to overleap the purpose of those who employ it, and which, in another way, and by an opposite force, comes as near to annihilating God in the trust and love and faith of men as he was in danger of being annihilated by physical representations. For, while men cannot be very much updrawn by a gross deity made up of human passions, only infinite in development or carried to excess, while such a God could be of very little service to mankind, so, if you refine the conception of God, if you exalt his perfection, until you have carried him so far away from the physical and the social that he is beyond analogy and beyond the initial experiences of the human heart, you have a shadowy God of abstractions, as impossible to be approached, to be loved, or to be trusted, as it is impossible to approach with love and trust a problem of

Euclid, or to bow down and say your prayers to a theorem of mathematics. If you imbrute God, if you incarnate him (in the ordinary sense of the term), you lose him in one direction ; but by exhalation and evaporation, you lose him in the other direction.

And so it comes to pass that men have often, in the attempt to magnify God's glory, practically destroyed him.

It is needful for me to believe that God is perfect ; that he is holy ; that his holiness is the supreme end of administration. Amidst all the myriad conflicts of life, in spite of all the thousand backward-setting eddies along the stream of time, it is necessary that I should believe that the great under-current—the gulf-stream—is moving steadily out toward the ocean of perfectness and blessedness. If, therefore, one represents holiness to me as so self-contained, so selfish, so sensitive, so jealous, so cold, so centralizing, that it loses all analogy to what I love, then my God is hidden from me, not by excess of brightness, but by excess of abstraction.

This will receive its highest illustration if you will remember how, in times of religious excitement, eminent and excellent teachers have warned men against grieving the Spirit of God. Some such have said, "See that you go back from these sacred seats to your house in silence ; be still before God ;" and men have gone home, fearing that if they dropped into common conversation God would be grieved away from them. And when men have been thoughtful as to the reconstruction of their life and conduct, when serious thoughts have been upon them, it has been said to them, "Mingle not in the household, withdraw to your chamber, give yourself up to solitude ;" and when, in the ordinary course of proper life, there were social unfoldings and innocent enjoyments, it has been said, "But is not the Spirit of God working with you ? Beware ! *beware !* lest you grieve the Spirit of God."

Now, what kind of spirit must that be that would take offense and show spite at the normal and natural and innocent unfoldings of human thought and human feeling, in those very relations where the divine providence has put us ?

Is God jealous, in that sense? Is God's Spirit in danger of being grieved away, as a fastidious beauty, coquetting with one and another, might take offense on the slightest provocation at a compliment a trifle too much or too little? Is that the ideal conception of the everlasting Father who is bearing the universe on through all its cataclysms and changes towards the eternity of blessedness? This misrepresentation of the divine influence has wrought limitation of view, perversion of view, and instead of making God more, it has made him less, narrower,—sharper, harder to be approached, less to be enjoyed; for of all beings that are large, generous, inconsiderate of themselves, and considerate of those that draw near to them, none is to be compared to God. He that made the heavens, who taketh up the stars as a little thing, whose ocean on the globe is but the palm of his hand, and to whom the isles are but as the dust of the balance—he is the mighty God. He is the one that bowed himself down in the person of Jesus Christ, and lay flat upon the ground, that all suffering humanity might press upon him, and that, rising through suffering, he might lift with himself all that needed to be carried up. And is the self-sacrificing God, who dies rather than that you should die—is he to be represented as nervous, and captious, and easily offended, and dashing away from men in their thoughtless and inconsiderate moods? No, there is nothing so patient, nothing so generous, nothing so considerate, nothing so long-suffering, as the Divine Spirit.

Is there, then, a revelation of the Divine Spirit, as separable from the Father and from the Son? If you will not ask me any other questions, I will say, Yes; but if the answer should lead you to say, "What is the Father? and what is the Son? and what is the Spirit?"—I am dumb. I cannot understand *human* mental philosophy; I cannot understand, or analyze, nor has it yet been given to science to analyze, the relations of soul and body, of intellect and emotion, or of nerve and brain, with their contents and their products. How little we understand of these things, though we live with them and by them, and have their analogues! They are not brought down into the sphere where



our familiar knowledge dwells. And shall one who understands so little of mental philosophy in himself, assume that he can rise into the realm of the divine, and unfold what are the conditions and methods of life in God?

Nevertheless, when the Bible speaks of God as the Father, and again as the Son, and again as the Spirit, individualizing them, I do not care about answering objections. I say, "I accept it just at its face; not because I have probed it and reasoned upon it so that I understand it, but because I find it more convenient to accept than to reject it. Since I cannot understand it, I take it upon statement,—that is all." "Do you believe in the Trinity?" I am asked. Yes. "Why?" Because it is easier to believe in it than not, considering all the facts and circumstances; not, however, because I understand it, when the Spirit is spoken of as a separate entity or individuality of the divine nature. I do not undertake to reason upon it, or to show the relation of the divine spirit. It is quite enough for me to say that there exists, and that there acts, a divine Spirit; that it is cast out through all God's universe; and that it is the source of human life in all its higher ranges. There is a divine influence which acts upon the higher nature of man. This is the simple teaching of the Bible. It does not represent the Spirit of God as working upon matter, or upon the lower social conditions of humanity; it represents it as having to do with heroism, with self-sacrifice, one for another, or one for the whole—patriotism. In all the higher developments of life, it makes the gloomy history of the race to shine, at points. These developments are accredited to the divine influence, or the divine Spirit, although we are not prepared to say dogmatically that this is the supreme, the single, the exclusive, function of the divine Spirit; and if there is to be no dogmatism, it is enough to say that, so far as we understand it, the divine Spirit works on that side of human life and human nature which is nearest to God, to give it exaltation.

Look, for a moment. We all see that the race, however it comes into the world, comes through the gate of weakness, of want, and of imperfection. Every child that is born

is at first but an empty sack. Whatever fills it thereafter, is to be gained. Paupers we come, crying, absolutely helpless, without power to get, lying in the arms of wisdom and love and power; and we are to learn everything, and by unfolding experience to come to some capacity of self-government and self-care. In the ripest conditions of human life, we come limping into society, miserably weak and low; and how much more, as you go down out of civilized and Christian households, when you look at the way in which the whole world in every generation begins to march, the little army comes in without banners or trumpets or insignia of power! How the whole world creeps first, and pulses, and cries and wails, and is weak in every direction! So, by the decree of God, the march begins at every generation through the door of zero; it starts from nothing, and rises slowly towards something, and then comes to a little more, and to a little more. First, there is the animal; and it slowly unfolds out of animalism into sociality; and then out of sociality slowly into reason and reasoning; and last, slowest, hardest, most unsymmetric and imperfect, out of reason into moral excellence, which lifts a man quite away from the brute creation, and develops in him attributes and results which are utterly unlike anything that we see in the most intelligent lower animals. This is God's decree; and there, in the whole great black continent of Africa, it has been seen through the sounding ages; so, in Asia; so, in civilized Europe; so in Christianized America. Everywhere, whether men be barbarian or civilized, bond or free, Christian or heathen, this is the law of the race—that they begin at nothing, and come steadily up through the animal to the social, through the social to the reasonable, and through the reasonable to the moral and spiritual.

Now, if this be the foundation, creative fact, might it not be expected that there would stand over against a world so created a divine force that should adapt itself to this special want; and that, as there are provisions in the physical world for the physical unfolding of man, as there are provisions in the social world for the unfolding of his social nature, and as there are provisions in schools and other instrumen-



talities for the unfolding of his intellectual nature, there should be somewhere, a provision for the development of the spiritual, invisible, moral nature of man—that which allies itself to God, and to things which reach beyond time?

When, therefore, it is taught that there is a divine Spirit which works upon these higher elements in men for which there is no provision in material nature, very little in social relations, and none at all in the great currents that move races and generations of mankind; when it is revealed that there is, far beyond the reach of the bodily eye, a silent and universally shining Spirit that works incessantly upon the higher nature of man to give it vitality, does not every one say, “This is a view of God which adapts itself precisely to the facts of the physical creation of the race in the world and in time,” and does not the state of facts in the race point to the existence of such a Spirit?

As Leverrier, by his calculations, determined that there must be an undiscovered planet somewhere, to account for the disturbance and perturbation of neighboring planets, and as by research this was found to be true; so we may calculate, from certain given states and conditions of men in life, that there must be, somewhere in the celestial space, certain great moral influences, or else that the scheme of the race is imperfect, fortuitous. There is apparent the necessity of the agency of a divine Spirit, to give life and inspiration, not to the lower, but to the higher nature, of man. This idea completes the whole scheme of life, and gives ground and reason for the faith which we could scarcely get from the mere text and letter, but which we eagerly accept (seeking it, indeed) when we come to look upon the sins of mankind collectively and at large.

What do you need that nature has not for you—for your pulse, for your bones, for your flesh? Is not nature a magazine for all your physical wants? What do you need, to teach you gentleness and courtesy and obligingness, that is not provided in the household? The provocation to goodness is there incessant. Both joy and sorrow are as schoolmasters to teach every child what belongs to his social life. And what do you need to inspire industry, frugality, and fore-

thought, that is not supplied by the laws and customs of the society in which you dwell? All these elements fit you to be a good man in this world; and they would be enough, if there were only this world. It would be worth a man's while to be moral and virtuous, if he were to live but eighty years on earth—for the moral and virtuous reap fewer pains and more joys than any others. He that is without morality and virtue, is bankrupt on earth even. But if this world is only the seed-bed, the sprouting-ground of another world; if men are but cuttings in thumb-pots here, to be rooted and carried through the winter, that they may be transplanted in the other life, then there is another question: How shall we get the training which is needed by the germ forms of those elements that are to belong to the invisible and purely spiritual state?

An ox lies down and chews his cud; and the cow breathes heavy through the night, her breath freighted with the odor of the fields; and they never say, "I lay me down to sleep," or, "Our Father who art in heaven," or, "Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" They do not think of these things, and they do not need to think of them; and still less do they think of dying, or anything of that kind: but there is not a human soul that does not think of death and of the future; even low and vulgar men have strange insights, and yearnings inarticulate. Something ails them, they say; they do not know what it is, but there is the voice of the everlasting speaking to them; they have a sense of the infinite and of the enduring; intimations come to them of the great invisible toward which we are all being whirled as leaves before the autumn gale; they have a consciousness of the undeveloped nature that is in them; and where is there in human life that which gives any adequate development or instruction to these higher elements which exist in the soul such as is provided, outside of men, in the organization of society, for the lower elements of the soul?

So then, while God reaches us mediately, or by instruments, all the way up to the realm of the moral and spiritual elements, he reaches also, by the Spirit, immediately, all those elements which are to constitute the essential qualities

to be brought into the other life. The Divine Spirit, infinite and invisible, stimulates the hearts of men, and adapts itself not only to the average condition of the human race in this world, but to that condition in the other sphere which every man, according as he is unfolded, feels that he needs more instruments to unfold than simply the instrument of society. Above literature, and learning, and the synagogue, and the temple, and the altar, and the church, and the cathedral, we need that power which is in God; and that is the power which is represented in the word of God by the Divine Spirit.

Far be it from me to say that the Divine Spirit exerts itself only by direct impact, if I may so say; that it falls down on the human soul as the sun falls down on an apple, on a flower, or on the grass. I do not say that it does not do so; but I do not hazard saying that this is the only, or the most accustomed, method. I can perceive from history that God's will and God's power act in general through instrumentalities. I can see that he acts through laws, as we are accustomed to term them, and reaches the ends of creation, not by an immediate exertion of his will, but through instrumentalities and organizations which he has created. I can comprehend that he administers the material globe by law; and I can well understand that the same economy may prevail to a very large extent in regard to the active influence of the Spirit. At any rate, I can understand that it so connects itself with influences, with objects, with suggestions, with ten thousand things which in their nature are adapted to touch man more or less, that we may say that the Divine Spirit acts through the agency of the universe, as well as by the direct efficiency of soul-power. I love to think so. When I perceive what association does, when I perceive that nine-tenths of the things which are valuable in life are made so by association, I see not why I should not extend that to the highest realm.

The homeliest house, probably, on this continent, is the house which you think of as being more radiant than any gem or pearl—that old one-story, low-roofed house, where every window rattled with every wind; where you woke in



winter to find above your woolen counterpanes a snow blanket on your bed ; where, crawling under the rafters in the garret, you received many a bruise ; where the creaking old well-sweep stood ; where there was no yard ; where, perhaps, the lower animals fed at your very door-step ; where you got up early on winter mornings to do, with half-frozen fingers, the chores, and thought it hard, no doubt ; but whither, after all, your thoughts turn back with pleasure. And you say, "I would give more to see that old red house, or that house grown brown by weather strokes, than any other place on earth." Why would you ? "Because I remember my old mother, as I saw her there. I remember where she sat." I go with you, and you say, "Here is the old chair." A rickety old chair, indeed, it is, and I see nothing in it ; but how beautiful it is to you ! That corner of the room—I would not, with all the hatred I have of rheumatism, sit there half an hour for anything ; but to you, it is like a nook in paradise. How beautiful it is, as you see it ! I walk around the room, and say, "Humph ! this is where he was born ! Heaven save the mark !" but you go around the room, and presently you begin to wipe your eyes, and you say, "Let us go, I cannot stand this any longer." That old coffin of a house—there is nothing in it. It is a tumble-down affair, with no comeliness, no convenience about it. From attic to cellar, it is full of vermin, and all things noisome and repulsive to the taste ; and yet, to your eye, if it were built of gold and silver, and gemmed, it would not be so beautiful, because it has been overlaid by your feelings. It is because your feelings have been the upholsterers, and have hung in it precious memories and associations, that it is ten thousand times dearer to you than matter could make it.

Talk to me about magnificent churches and cathedrals ! They are magnificent ; but many a man will cry at a hay-rick who could not be made to drop a tear at a cathedral. Many a man will reverently take hold of a creaking door and say, "Ah, this is the same old door that I used to hear turn on its hinges," who will stand unmoved at the sight of the most gorgeous architecture.

And why should this not extend itself ? Why should

God, since he has made this law to operate through all the lower realms of the universe, disdain to put it in operation in the higher realm? Why should not the shaking leaf, balsamic, and filling the summer with fragrance; why should not the bird that flies through the ether; why should not the clouds that sail in the heavens on their voyages, and go to wreck, and come back again; why should not the hum of bees, the blooming of flowers, the growing and ripening of fruit, the music in the air, the sweet influences of summer, bewitching and bewildering the imagination—why should not all these things be touched by the divine Spirit, so as to affect us, and to become the mediums through which the Spirit of God acts upon the imagination, upon the reasoning faculties, and upon those remoter forms of moral development which have no phrase, no words,—which are inarticulate, because they are the highest elements, and so far from rude matter that they cannot be embodied?

Far be it from me, therefore, to say that the Divine Spirit does not act mediately through forms of nature and society, through a thousand means in social life. Doubtless this is true; but is there nothing more than this? I hope there is. I accept, without questioning, the intimations in the New Testament that God's Spirit acts by direct influence upon the soul of man. I long to have it so; I perceive the need of it; I feel that need. I see it in others, and interpret it from my own experience.

It is not enough for a child in trouble that the mother should sit on one side of the room while it is on the other. When it is wounded by some rude word from a servant, or when it is hurt by some fall, it is not enough that the mother from the other side of the room speaks to it and comforts it. The little child scrambles upon its legs, and runs to bury itself in the mother's bosom, and feels her. Of all consolation, there is nothing like a mother's bosom.

And the soul, tempted, tried, humbled, wearied, badgered, cast to and fro, longs to feel the very touch of God, and to know that it is played upon by nothing less than the soul-power of God himself. And why should we resist this idea, or step aside from it? Why, if there be no potential

argument against it, should we not take it without question? I do. I believe it, and rejoice in it. I believe it is in accordance with the nature of God that he should quicken thought-power, and imagination power—the highest of human faculties—not merely through the instrumentality of institutions, and stated teachings, and influences of nature, and phenomena of every kind, but also by direct down-shining. Our language scarcely gives us terms fit to express this ineffable thought; but, nevertheless, we can understand that there may be such modes of divine life and action as that the soul of God en-spheres itself in our soul. So the Master said that he would come and dwell in men; and so the Apostle said, afterwards, “Know ye not that ye are temples of the Holy Ghost?” We have, in the New Testament, declarations that God comes by the Spirit to dwell in men’s souls, as though they were temples and shrines built for him. And while you may call them figures, why should you reason away, throw away, the sweetest, grandest truths that ever irradiated humanity?

Now we come to that part of our text which warns us, since this is the inevitable constitution of things, not to grieve the Spirit of God whereby we are sanctified. Here is that divine influence by which men are developed and carried up; and why should they grieve it away? How do they grieve it away? Is it not imperative? Is it not omniscient and omnipotent? If it please God to send the Spirit to men, is any man able to drive it from him?

This may be a question of curiosity, but it need not be a practical question; for we are taught—and I suppose the teaching is founded on certain physical facts in nature—that the body cannot see God. Opaque matter has not in it anything that represents invisible spiritual existence. We bear in ourselves spiritual germs and elements. If they are developed, through them we come to a communion with and understanding of God. If they are not developed, if only our lower animal and worldly nature is developed, then there is no possibility of our understanding God, except as the metaphysician’s God. We can excogitate a God of ideas; but a God of ideas alone is a God of icebergs.

There is no summer among the crystalline icebergs of the



North ; nothing grows there, and nothing flourishes there except darkness and congelation ; and a God that is built up merely of theories and problems and philosophical generalizations, is not the God for us.

If, therefore, that in us which is capable of understanding and appreciating God is in full force, we can understand and appreciate him ; but if that in us which was meant to be a lens through which we should discern the divine nature is diminished and starved and kept under, how shall we ever see God ? Hence it is said, "Blessed are the pure in heart ; they shall see God." The eyes through which we are to behold God are the moral affections ; and where these affections are kept clear, single, then men shall discern, feel, and recognize the Power that is drawing them ; but if anything else is made predominant, they cannot see him nor recognize his presence.

Now, where men live so as to make the body the chief end of their existence ; where men's sentient enjoyments are all of a physical nature, they are in no condition to hold communion with God. It is said by a man that lives to eat and to drink, "I do my neighbor no harm ; indeed, I do my butcher and grocer and confectioner a good deal of good." He prides himself on his benevolence, because he buys things of these men, and so indirectly benefits them. He lives to serve his own capacious selfishness ; and he eats and drinks and sleeps, and wakes to eat and drink and sleep again ; and so the curriculum of life is rolled through. He says, "I have stolen nobody's purse ; I have broken into nobody's house ; I have set on fire nobody's barn ; I have run away with nobody's child ; I have done no mischief in the street or on the Exchange ; I have lived at home and paid my taxes ; I am a good man ; and what lack I yet ?" The man who has made his belly his god ; who has said to the sea, to the land, to the heavens, and to the years, "Feed me, feed me, feed me,"—now, wheezing with fatness, at the end of life, and with nothing on earth except palate, tongue, and stomach, says, "What lack I yet ?" Oh, collopy man ! Oh, thick-ribbed man ! Oh, thick-cutting pork man, what lackest thou ? Nothing, as an animal. Were there some celestial

cattle-fair, thou wouldst take the prize. Thou, O beast, all-devouring monster, jaw and stomach art thou; and thou feedest and feedest, and flourishest and flourishest! But where is thy reason? Where is thy conscience? Where is thy faith? What hath hope for thee? The horizon of thy life is Fulton Market. What is there in the years to come of nobility to thee,—thou that belondest to the immortal spheres, but art glued to the rock, and baser than the oyster thou dost eat? Dost thou say, “What lack I yet?” while still thy mouth, made for prayer and praise and glory, is opening and shutting, bivalve of humanity?

If one gives himself to lower things—I will not say to gluttonous and riotous excesses; I will say to animalizing tendencies that shut out the light, the glory, of God and the influences of the Divine Spirit—if one, for the sake of living in luxury, eats with such moderation that he shall be able to eat continuously and long; if one makes physical sensation the end of his life, what inshining is there for him? What is there, when the Divine Spirit rests upon him? Nothing in the head, little in the mouth, something in the heart, and much in the stomach; and though the Divine Spirit may be given forth for him, to what effect is it? The rain falls on a granite rock, and the sun smites it all summer long; but what does a granite rock bring forth? The sun pours down its warmth through long days upon Sahara, but it produces nothing; and the Divine Spirit rests on many and many a man who puts such barriers of sensuous enjoyment up that when the influence of God comes to him he wards it off; and so he grieves the Spirit. He lives in his lower nature, and the influence of the Divine Spirit leaves him where it found him.

There is something associated with all animal indulgence which repels the Spirit. Men of dyspeptic stomachs, of slender habits, though they do not come under the strictures which have been applied to others, are, in their way, in danger of grieving the Spirit. There are many persons who feel that this subject has a legitimate application thus far, but who do not perceive its further application. If, however, they would carry it forward, they would see that, in so far as

this particular matter is concerned, avarice is as bad as gluttony and intemperance and rioting. That is to say, if a ship goes down in ten feet of water, and everybody in it is drowned, it would not be a whit worse if it went down in five hundred feet of water, and everybody in it was drowned. The drowning is the thing; and if that takes place, a little more or a little less water is of no account.

Now, while there are many relations in which gluttony and lust and drunkenness are more detestable than avarice, in this one relation—its power to extinguish the Divine illumination, or to effectually interpose between the Spirit of God and the human soul—it is as bad as dissipation. Not the wallowing Roman emperors more completely shut God out from the possibility of touching their souls than those men who, whatever may be their morality, and sense of propriety, and obedience to society laws, are at heart intensely desirous of promoting their own pecuniary and property interest. I need not say to you who have heard me exhort men to make money, and who have heard me say that industry is one of the means of grace, and that foresight and prudence and frugality and self-denial are essential to the highest success in human life—I need not say to you that I do not despise riches; but it is one thing to look upon riches as your servant, and it is another thing to get down on your knees and say your prayers to riches as your God. It is one thing to desire property, that you may make it a subservient instrumentality on account of the things that it can bring and the things that it can ward off; and it is another thing to give one's heart to such an ambition for wealth that it becomes a center of life, so that all things are obliged to take measure and proportion from it. Such an avarice as this is not only atheistic, idolatrous and heart-hardening, but it defies the very nature of God, and shuts out from the soul that in-shining Spirit without which we are animals, with no hope of emancipation into the true spirit-life of the universe. Methinks there are some who should guard against this feeling.

I am not one of those who believe that money-making is the most dangerous thing in the world. I give full heed to



the declaration of Scripture ; I know that the love of money is dangerous ; and that is what I was speaking of—not money, but the *love* of it. But, while there is many a man who makes money for the love of it, there is many another man who makes money, saying, “It is my child,” or, “It is my wife,” or, “It is my father,” or, “It is my friend,” or, “It is my country.” Loving money—*loving* it, *hugging* it—that cannot be too strongly condemned ; nevertheless, I do not believe that the love of money is half so common as many careless censors say it is. I do not believe that one in a hundred who go up and down Wall street—that strait and narrow way (at any rate, few there are that find it, and fewer that get through it to heaven, I fear)—I do not believe that one in a hundred of them, if you were to search them home to the quick, would be found to have the love of money. They use money, through love, many of them, for other purposes. Here and there you shall find a man, with many virtues, many social excellences, many good qualities, who, after all, when you come to pierce to the very center where he lives, is ruled by avarice in some form, which is to him a canker, and to others a mildew, a pest, a curse. And avarice is one of those things by which the Spirit of God is grieved away.

In like manner, there is an egotistical conceit which destroys men by interposing between the Divine Spirit and themselves an impenetrable medium. Men’s thoughts of themselves, if you could imagine their daily thoughts as rolling up like curling smoke, would take on the form of embattled hosts above their head—would appear like an army in the heavens. In their conceit, they assume themselves to be the chief work of God ; they feel themselves to be gods, and they say, “What lack I yet ?” They survey their perfections—for they think themselves to be perfect—with great complacency ; and since other men do not see their supposed perfections, they really believe the rest of the world to be purblind, and envious, and jealous. Their excellence shines into the darkness, but the darkness comprehends it not !

Thus, in various degrees, this intense and intolerable conceit of one’s self, this utter want of humility, by which a

man measures himself, interposes between him and God, and presents to the down-coming influence of the Divine Spirit an opacity through which it cannot enter.

So, a man does not need to be gross or sensual or avaricious, in order to separate himself from God. His conceit, his pride, may generate qualities which will turn the edge of the light, and leave him in darkness while he boasts that he is supreme in intelligence.

In short, whenever, in the soul of man, any of those passions and appetites by which we wage war with the seasons, with the rock, with the soil, with beasts, and with rude men—whenever any of these powers, which normally tend to act downward, rise to supremacy, look high, and assume to have the right of predominance, then they prevent God from exerting any beneficent influence upon them. So far as the development of any divine influence in them is concerned, they turn away from the Spirit of God.

Contrariwise, all sweet affections, all gracious tastes, that ally themselves more and more to refinements, work toward the ineffable. All acts of heroism, anywhere and everywhere, humble though they may be; all gentleness under provocation; all patience under wrong; the ten thousand scattered dew-drops of graces and virtues which abound in life; all true loving, all humility, all aspiration, that yearn for the betterment of the unfortunate, and that teach the soul, forgetting the things that are behind, to press forward toward the mark for the prize of its high calling in Christ Jesus,—these qualities not only invite the indwelling of the Spirit of God, but make that indwelling possible. It is with these sides of man's nature that God has commerce. It is through these elements that God reaches the soul; that summer comes to the roots, and makes them swell, and gives to every bud a noble opening, and enables every branch to spread more widely.

Says the apostle :

*"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God,"*

Let me read the whole context :

"Let him that stole, steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have

[what? Something to invest?] to give to him that needeth [the best investment that a man can make]. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth." "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God."

It is as if it were said, "Dishonesty, flagrancy in the lower life, evil thinking, evil doing—these are the methods of grieving the Divine Spirit."

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted."

That is what the world is pleased to call "gush"—tender-heartedness. Great, hoary, hardened, stiff-bearded men, that make their way as if their cheeks were bruising rocks, bouncing here and there, dashing through life—these men, seeing one trying to get along by gentleness, by kindness, and by love, speak of it as the "mush of magnanimity." Nevertheless, the Word of God standeth sure:

"Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Now I have known men to put these two verses up in their counting-house, so that they might always have them before their eyes; and it is a good thing to do. I will read them again.

"Let all bitterness [*all bitterness*; the least bit of bitterness will spoil a whole can of milk], and wrath, and anger, and clamor [buzz, buzz, buzz], and evil speaking [*sweet, soft, sinuous*], be put away from you, with all malice [*from which these sprang*]; and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you."

Go and write that down; put it up in your counting-house; read it; and then, the next time a man does a thing which is a little more outrageous than you can bear, let him have it! Blaze at him! Then come back and say, "Well, there are cases in which you cannot expect to be a saint;" and so dodge, all the way through the Bible, the things which were meant for your life inside, always making excuses for yourself, scorning nothing that has selfishness in it, and meanness in it, and willingly following in the bondage of your lower nature! You are ashamed to take on the livery of those bright and celestial states which need no buffet, no



discipline, but which are already in sympathy with God, and which bear with them the sweet flavor of the Divine Spirit !

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not be ashamed of him ; and in his coming with glory he will not be ashamed of you.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

WE rejoice, our Father, that thou hast revealed thyself in such a measure that we believe that thou art, and that those who come to thee must come in spirit. Thou canst not be approached by these bodies. Though thou art all around them, and art the cause of the life that is in them, yet they cannot behold God. Only with that which is within can we discern thee; nor with that, except when enlightened by thy Spirit and purified; for thou hast declared that only the pure in heart can see thee. We rejoice that we may thus, in drawing near to thee by the understanding, be also drawn in disposition, and in inward likeness become worthy to be called the sons of God. Grant that we may feel that this is the end of our lives whereunto all should strive, and that this is that toward which thou art drawing the created whole over which thou art ruling: for we need this vision of thy future glory in the glorification of thy creatures, to sustain us amidst the darkness and doubts and troubles which fly up from human sorrow and all the works of darkness upon the globe; because so long hath the prince of the power of the air ruled, apparently, that we need help in our faith to believe that above the malign government is the supreme government of love. So long have things seemed to go jangling in hateful discords that we need to know that, afar off, where all sounds do meet, they at last are composed to celestial harmony; and that, where force seems stronger than right, where passions dominate over all sweet feelings, and where they who are rudest possess the earth, we need faith to believe that the meek shall inherit the earth, and that goodness shall yet prevail, and that avarice and dominating pride and all passions that have had on earth such a sphere and influence, shall be put away and destroyed, and that the glory of God shall shine forth in every soul, and that the whole universe shall stand rounded in purity and restored, rejoicing together, when the final shout of victory shall go up, and thy crowned head shall look forth in beatitudes of love to rejoice in the joy which thou art everywhere inspiring.

Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly, for our hearts faint. The way is great. We are shut in by clouds, by forests, by thickets. We are ourselves so animalized, so swept by passions at times into sympathy with passion, and the lower life is so full of force, and the ways of men are so full of gusts and storms, that we are carried away from our faith and hope and comfort, and we need thine indwelling. We need that covert on which the storm beats in vain. We need the sight of God sitting King upon the flood, and rising above all storms, rising far above thrones and principalities and all names, regent over time and darkness, throughout the universe, to uphold us and to comfort us.

But thou who art so great art also as a Shepherd. Thou goest forth taking the lambs in thine arms, and most gently dealing with those that are out of the way. Thou hast art so great dost not delight in thyself, but in those that thou hast created—the great

family grouped about thee beyond all thought of computation. We rejoice that in thy supremacy of power and wisdom and goodness is supremacy of tenderness and patience and long-suffering. Yet we are glad that patience and long-suffering shall not serve iniquity; that thou art not patient because thou art indifferent; that thou art healing; that thou art everywhere rebuilding; that thou art waiting because thou discernest the end from the beginning. Thou wilt not build up wickedness; thou wilt cause all wickedness to perish. Thou wilt cleanse thy works from all dross; and the day shall come when thy long-suffering shall be glorified in the recuperation of all, in the up-building of all, in the salvation of thine host throughout all worlds, and in the rejoicing of the universe thereat.

And now, O Lord our God, we desire to have comfort in thee. In ourselves thou hast made some comfort; and in those things which are round about us thou hast also made joy and comfort; but may we above all these lower works always, or at least at times, rise to that great Fountain whence all things are filled, and rejoice in the Lord, and bear about with us that sense which can come only from communion with thee.

We beseech thee, now, that thou wilt grant, this morning, of thyself to all that are gathered together here. We pray that thy blessings may drop down as the rain and the dew.

We commend to thee especially the dear little children who have been brought by loving parents into the midst of this loving brotherhood, and who are now of us, under our care and sympathetic watch; and we pray for them, that their lives may be precious in thy sight, and that they may grow up in bodily health to all morality, to all virtue, and to all piety. May these children adorn the household, the avocations of industry, and the professions of life. May they become noble citizens, good men, holy, God-fearing and man-loving. And we pray, O Lord our God, that thou wilt grant that, if any of them are to finish their errand before we think, their going may not be as perishing meteors. May their parents have faith to believe that they rise to the glory of the blessed and wait; and that they are to be restored, not as in a napkin, but augmented a hundred-fold in sweetness, and beauty, and glory, and joy-inspiring power. And we beseech thee that those who, looking upon these dear children, think of their own, may be blessed of God; and may those who think of children that were theirs, and are departed from out of their arms, and have left the night darker, and the house stiller, and the heart emptier, find their solitude of grief blessed to them. Bless them in those thoughts which know not how to round themselves into expression—the uttermost distress of hearts that secretly bleed. We pray that the revelation in Jesus Christ of God's love for little children may comfort them. May the memory of that blessed act of thine own life, Jesus, Master, in which thou didst take little children in thine arms, and set them upon thy knee, and put thine arms about them, and thine hands upon their heads and bless them, comfort us, and, to the latest year of life, those, so many, throughout the great and elect army of grief who are called to mourn over the loss of beloved little ones. Oh,

sanctify such sorrow, that it may make the heart deeper; that it may make the affections purer; that it may inspire faith with disinterestedness.

And we beseech thee that thou wilt grant that all those who are called to rear little children—especially those who this morning have expressed their vows and covenants and determinations to rear these children in God's love—may be enabled to fulfill their purpose. Grant that they may have that wisdom given to them, and all that patience and self-sacrifice, which they require. May they themselves learn justice, that they may teach it to their children; and purity, that it may shine down upon the hearts of their children; and truth, and love, and honor, and fidelity, and all Christian manliness, that they may not only teach these things, but be examples of that which they teach.

And so, teach us disinterestedness in all the relations of our lives. May we look, not on our own things alone, but also on the things of others. May that mind be in us which was in Christ. May we, if exalted and filled with privilege, not account it hard to be ourselves put down, to be emptied of all our honors and privileges, if thereby we may be brought into sympathy with the poor and needy. And when we shall be exalted, may we not be afraid of that humiliation wherewith God crowns his children. May we be afraid of those things by which we are so apt to be turned downward. Grant that we may not follow our ambition, selfishness, or self-aggrandizement; rather may we seek the things that make for peace, and gentleness, and love toward one another, and goodness. And so, by the Holy Ghost may we be lifted above the weaknesses of this mortal state, and be worthy to be called the children of God.

Vouchsafe thy blessing, we pray thee, upon all the interests of this great church. Accept our testimonies of thanksgiving for thine abiding presence with us, and for that unity and that fruitfulness which are the testimony of thy presence and indwelling. May we desire the welfare of all the churches that are round about us, and near to us.

Bless thy servants, every one, who preach the Gospel of Christ. We pray that their weaknesses may be strengthened into all grace and goodness, and that though they may sow laboriously, and wet with tears the seed, they may come every one of them, by and by, bringing golden sheaves in their bosoms. Unite thy people of every name. Break down the walls of separation that are between them. May the heart be mightier than the head. Rule over thy people everywhere, that love and fellowship may prevail, and that the power of truth may be augmented by the force of the soul. And so may all the world at last behold thy salvation, and begin to know thee. Let thy kingdom come, and let thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

We ask it for Christ Jesus' sake. *Amen.*



## PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

OUR Father, we beseech thee that thy blessing may rest upon the speaking of the truth, and upon the truth which is so much more glorious than the speaking of it. Give us to rise above all symbol and exposition, and have the witness of thy Spirit within us that we are thy children; and we know that we can have no such witness if we have not the mind that was in Christ Jesus. Grant to us the power to overcome the natural man; to give ascendancy to the new man in Christ Jesus, created in righteousness and for righteousness. And so may we walk while in the world as the light in the midst of darkness, as the salt of the earth. So may we walk in sorrow singing, and in defeat triumphing. So may our sorrows be the trumpet of our victories evermore. And all through life, as redeemed Christians, praising to the end, may we go with the strength of God, and die rejoicing; and may they who linger, hear some words wafted back from our departed spirit, telling them that there is a joy unutterable beyond the grave. And so, one by one, may we finish our course, and meet again in heaven to wonder at the dullness of this life, and at the glory of the life beyond in Christ Jesus.

And to thy name, O Father, Son and Spirit, shall be everlasting praises. *Amen.*



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
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